No. 28.

Woman's Foreign Missionary Society
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA
(WESTERN DIVISION).

"BRINGING THE RANKS UP TO THE STANDARD."

By Emma L. Burnett.

WHEN a boys' mission band was started in Fairview Church, with the popular and energetic Miss Nannie Bennett for President, and eleven members to begin with, they agreed to raise twenty-five dollars annually. This was a very fair amount for them, as nobody belonging to the band was rich, and some were what might be called poor. They also decided to raise the money, if possible, without resorting to the plan of giving entertainments.

The first year all went prosperously. The membership speedily increased to nineteen, and the promised sum was sent to headquarters in March, which was the time it was due. The next year things did not go on so swimmingly.

Three boys, who gave the most money, moved away from the town. Several others were away all summer, and came back with empty pockets; so, at the September meeting, it was found that the treasury contained only four dollars and sixty-nine cents.

"Boys," said Miss Nannie, "this won't do. Half of our year has gone, and we haven't got one-fifth of our money in yet."

The boys said: "Oh, never mind! It would come out all right. They would get some new members; three or four new boys were coming. They would pay up their dues. Christmas was coming, and then they would have plenty of money, and would give extra amounts."

But, after once falling behind, it was very hard to pull up again. Boys who were able to give five or ten cents a month as they went along, found it impossible to give twenty or forty all at once. Even Christmas did not help much. Some did not get the money they expected, and others could not resist temptations to spend their's; so, when the January meeting came round, the treasurer had only ten dollars and ninety-three cents to report.

There were some very blank looks, and Miss Nannie said:

"Well, here we are with less than two months in which to raise more than half of our money."

"I'm afraid we shan't get it this year, Miss Nannie," said Daniel Roseman.

"It looks very much that way," said Martin Conway.

"Won't it do to give just whatever we can raise each year?" Charlie Hope asked.

"You know we talked that all over at the beginning," Miss Nannie replied, "and agreed that it would be far the best way to fix upon a sum, and try always to come up to it."

"Well, can't we send in what we have this year, and start fresh next year?" Walter Green suggested. "We know now that every fellow must pay up as regularly in spring and summer as in winter, if we are to come out right."

There was some further talk. All the boys said they were sorry they could not come up to the mark; but there seemed to be no help for it now, the time was so short. They would try and get fifteen dollars, if possible, and that would have to do this time.

Miss Nannie listened quietly for a few minutes, and then sitting up very straight in her chair, with shining eyes, she said:

"Boys, I want to tell you a little story."

They all turned towards her.

"Once upon a time in a fierce battle, when many were falling around him, and his own company retreated, a standard-bearer was commanded to bring the standard back to the ranks. He refused (this does not seem like military discipline, but it's in the story), and called out: 'Bring the ranks up to the standard!' The officers did so, and victory followed."

The boys looked at one another. It was a very good story; but it wasn't a missionary story, and this was a missionary society.

"I'm not very good at illustrations," Miss Nannie resumed, "and perhaps you won't think this a very perfect one; but it does seem to me that, after entering this missionary

army and pledging ourselves to give a certain sum each year, we ought to strain every nerve to redeem our pledge. When we agree to make a smaller sum do, it is like retreating and bringing the standard back to the ranks."

Again there was silence. Some of the boys moved about restlessly, though none were ready to speak.

"Now, boys," came in the President's clear tones, "*shall* we retreat?"

"No!" shouted half a dozen; "we'll bring the ranks up to the standard!" And Lewis Birch, the Secretary, sprang up on a chair waving the minute book, crying out: "Come on, fellows!"

"We must raise that money," one boy declared.

"It would be a burning shame not to do it," said another.

"The meanest thing going," said a third.

The tide had turned, and now the only question was how the money should be raised.

When quiet was restored, Miss Nannie said:

"We will resolve ourselves into a committee of ways and means, and consider how we shall get fourteen dollars and seven cents by the middle of March."

"Stop a moment," said Frank Redfield, feeling in all his pockets, and finally producing seven cents, which he handed to the treasurer, "let us make up that eleven dollars, and start fair."

"Good for you, Frank!" the boys exclaimed.

"Now," said Lewis Birch, with mock gravity, "part of the sum having been donated by the liberal Mr. Redfield, we shall proceed to consider how the rest may be procured."

"Can't we have some sort of a show, and raise the money

that way?" Harry Young, one of the new members, suggested. "One of those funny art galleries, or something like that."

"We want to run this band without any shows," Frank Redfield said. "Besides, the girls' band has just had some kind of a colored tea party, pink and white, or blue and yellow, or something; and folks don't want to hear of any more shows for a little while. No, we've got to earn this money, or *squinch* it out of ourselves somehow."

Nobody spoke for a moment; then Willie Naylor, the very smallest boy in the band, said, timidly:

"I've thought of a way to get a little money."

"How is that?" asked Miss Nannie, smiling encouragement.

"Mamma gives me three cents a day to buy something to eat at recess. I'll ask her if I may do without the bananas and things, and give the money to the band."

"That's splendid!" Miss Nannie exclaimed, and the boys cheered.

"If such a little fellow can do without things he likes, I guess I can do without a new sled," said Martin Conway. "Here, Joe,"—to the treasurer—"here's forty-two cents I've saved toward it."

Again the cheers broke forth.

You perceive this was a rather noisy missionary meeting; but it was an extra occasion.

"I guess I'll let the mixtures go this time," said John Harvey, taking out a quarter and tossing it with a nonchalant air to the treasurer. "Catch it, Joe."

Everbody knew John got very few quarters, and was ex-

travagantly fond of candy, so the applause was long and loud.

"Here's the dollar that was to take me to the concert next week," said Miss Nannie.

"No, no, Miss Nannie," the boys cried, "that's not fair. You've given a dollar and half already, and you're so fond of concerts."

"I'm not any fonder of them than John is of 'mixtures,' or Willie of bananas and pretzels. If you boys can give up sleds and all sorts of things, I can give up a concert. We all have the same interest in this matter."

"I haven't a cent, and don't expect to have any money given me between this and next Fourth of July," said Lewis Birch, "but I'm glad to see it is snowing pretty fast. I'll get some money out of that."

"Clearing off pavements?" inquired Gus Clark.

Lewis nodded.

"I always do ours, and that's ten cents every time. Then I can have old Mr. Carpenter's and Miss Keeley's any time for the asking. I'll stop on the way home to-night and engage them."

"I always have to do ours," said Gus, "but don't get any ten cents for it. I've a great mind, though, to get up early to-morrow, and try to get some others to do."

"Yes, do," said Lewis. "You hear about people dedicating their pens or their needles to missions; we might dedicate our shovels, at least until this money is raised."

"I haven't any shovel to dedicate," said Jack Boland, "but I'm going to ask them around at Brown & Smedley's grocery to take me on Saturdays when they want extra help."

"I haven't an idea how to earn anything," said Harry Young, "but I'll ask mother. Just tell that blessed woman you want to earn some missionary money, and she'll find you a way."

When closing time came they knelt in prayer for a blessing upon their efforts, and Miss Nannie counselled them not to adopt any plan without praying over it.

There is not space to relate how that money was raised —how Robbie Wells gave up going to see the trained horses; how Joe Redner, who was very fond of cultivating flowers, sold his two most precious plants; how John Harvey, not finding anything else to do, turned to and sewed carpet rags for his grandmother, and wasn't ashamed of it, either; how Walter Green put on a big calico apron, and scrubbed the pantry, cellar stairs and back kitchen, his mother paying him the same she would have paid a woman for it; how Miss Nannie bought cheap buttons for her new suit instead of the more expensive ones she wanted. It would be impossible to enter into the particulars of the raising of that money; but it was raised, every cent of it, and more, too. The boys said they would not for anything have handed in only fifteen dollars —*Presbyterian Journal.*

8 cents per doz.

Press of The Canada Presbyterian, Toronto.